

Stuart Symington, Missouri

REPORT ON VIETNAM BY SENATOR SYMINGTON

Mr. SYMINGTON. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that a letter written to the chairman of the Armed Services Committee and the chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, on both of which committees I have the honor to serve, with respect to my trip to South Vietnam, be inserted in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the letter was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

Hon. RICHARD B. RUSSELL,
Chairman, Committee on Armed Services
Hon. J. WILLIAM FULBRIGHT,
Chairman, Committee on Foreign Relations,
U.S. Senate, Washington, D.C.

GENTLEMEN: Attached is a 122-page report of my 10-day visit to South Vietnam, December 28-January 6 inclusive. I was accompanied by Lt. Col. Edward Peter, Army Legislative Liaison.

Also attached is a statement made upon my return January 10; plus a statement about the Central Intelligence Agency made on the floor January 14.

The table of contents summarizes the places visited, including a visit to Thailand.

In a previous visit the first part of December, as a member of the Eugene Black party incident to the signing of the Asian Development Bank agreement in Manila, I also went to Thailand, where I had two additional days with the Ambassador, the Central Intelligence people, and the military, visiting various bases incident to the functions of the latter.

On this first trip I also visited Japan; and in addition, the Philippines, Guam (from which the current B-52 strikes originate) and Hawaii.

In the latter State I was briefed by CINCPAC; also spent a day watching the realistic and effective training of the 25th Division in the mountains of Hawaii. Part of that division is now in South Vietnam.

Starting with Colonel Peter from Hawaii, we again visited Japan, Korea, Okinawa, Taiwan, Hong Kong and the United Arab Republic. A report on our visit to these countries is nearly completed and will be sent to you shortly.

In each country we discussed at length the international aspects of our current policies and programs with the U.S. Ambassadors and/or Ministers, with the representatives of the Central Intelligence Agency, and with the military; also with members of the other government in question.

Then we decided to fly back, rather than have the sharp edges of our impressions blurred by visits previously planned to Turkey, Naples, Germany, NATO in Paris, and Great Britain.

I am sending the attached report to the Defense Department, asking that as much as possible be declassified for publication.

Because so much has already been spoken and written about our past, present, and possible future actions in South Vietnam, it was felt that a day-to-day account of our activities might be the better way to make a report. Certain conclusions based on our findings, however, are listed as follows:

Cooperation and understanding between the services is excellent.

Representation of this Government by Ambassador Lodge is of the highest caliber. He is universally respected by the South Vietnamese Government as well as by our own civilian and military leaders.

General Westmoreland is handling the military operations in the highest tradition of the armed services. He also was a wise

choice, especially because of his intense interest in the problems of the South Vietnamese civilians.

Morale in the military is high. Unless our mission becomes more clear, however, this might not continue at the same high level among lower echelons.

There are logistic shortages, some serious but none critical; and there has been a marked improvement in that condition during recent weeks. The future of adequate supplying depends primarily upon (a) the ability to improve the unloading of ships at the various ports and (b) the nature and degree of the planned buildup.

Once more, there is a clear demonstration of the vital importance of air power. The C-130 is literally priceless in a country with practically no railroad capacity and so many at least periodically interdicted roads. It is difficult to visualize today how past military operations were ever conducted without helicopters.

Air operations in South Vietnam in support of ground troops have been effective; in fact, no one believes the present operations could have been conducted at all without this air power (naval air strength and Army air strength are of course included).

Air operations against North Vietnam have been relatively ineffective to the point where these operations should not be resumed unless there is more target license; license to hit such military targets as powerplants, oil stores, docks, and so forth.

The long coastline of Vietnam gives full opportunity for utilization of our superior naval power. That superiority, however, is not being adequately utilized.

There should be programs to reduce, if not eliminate, the sanctuary aspects of Laos and Cambodia. Both countries are being utilized by the Vietcong and North Vietnamese to transport men and equipment to South Vietnam; and also as sanctuaries. In both countries there are Communist headquarters.

The current limited military operations are very expensive and can only become steadily more expensive. The United States is carrying this economic load with little assistance from any nation of the free world, and no assistance from most. These other countries should assume more of this cost in manpower and money.

Those who urge greater effort on the part of this administration to attain peace at the conference table—plus continued cessation of military effort—generally acknowledge that they are not suggesting the United States withdraw from South Vietnam.

In a world telescoped in time and space to the point where "every country is now in the next county," one in which "spheres of influence" is now a relatively obsolete term, these statements promote an unwillingness to negotiate, because others interpret in them a weakening of the will of this Nation to carry on the struggle.

If South Vietnam is not the right place to defend the free world against totalitarian aggression, we should retire from that country on the best terms possible. This would probably result in a Communist takeover of additional countries and would damage seriously the world position and status of the United States. That would be the price, but it would not be catastrophic.

If South Vietnam is the right place to defend the free world against totalitarian aggression, however, then that fact should be recognized in more practical fashion. We cannot continue indefinitely the plans and programs incident to the current holding operation. After 25 years of almost continuous war, the South Vietnamese have lost much of the best of their manhood. They are tired and the gigantic cost to us is also very costly to them.

This conflict constitutes the fourth time in 20 years that the United States accepted

the splitting of the boundaries of a country; and then remained to bear most if not all of the cost—billions of dollars and hundreds of thousands of people. Regardless of the wisdom of those decisions, the effect on our economy is inescapable.

In the current conflict we conscientiously consider how our moves may affect the actions of the Red Chinese. At times it would seem there is undue preoccupation with this question and it is fair to ask whether this strengthens or weakens our capacity for decision. If the latter is true, how much more so will it be true when a few years hence China becomes a nuclear power?

The time is approaching when we must decide—while the decision is still ours to make—whether we will move forward or move out. Whichever course we choose, we must take it with courage, with skill, and with realism. We must be equally realistic about the consequences of avoiding this difficult choice.

Sincerely,

STUART SYMINGTON.

SYMINGTON PREPARING REPORT ON TRIP TO VIETNAM AND PACIFIC AREAS

WASHINGTON, January 10.—Senator STUART SYMINGTON, Democrat, of Missouri, who returned to Washington last night following 6 weeks in the Pacific area, including an intensive 10 days in South Vietnam, started working today on a report he will file with the Senate Armed Services and Foreign Relations Committees. He is a member of both committees.

Commenting about his visit to Vietnam, SYMINGTON said: "Certain conclusions stand out—the high caliber and morale of our American representatives, civilian as well as military; the magnificent cooperation between the services, Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marines, plus the great respect they have for each other; the improved cooperation and understanding, at all levels, under the leadership of General Ky and Ambassador Lodge, between the representatives of the Government of South Vietnam and our representatives."

The Missouri Senator said he planned to withhold further comment on Vietnam until completing his report for the committees.

Since Thanksgiving, SYMINGTON has visited foreign and U.S. officials and military missions not only in South Vietnam but also in Japan, Korea, Thailand, the Philippines, Okinawa, Taiwan and Hong Kong, Guam, Hawaii and Alaska.

In Vietnam, SYMINGTON's inquiry included numerous trips in the field. He met with key commanders, combat troops, combat support and service units and also visited with U.S. servicemen in the hospitals. SYMINGTON arrived in Saigon on Tuesday morning, December 28, and left there Thursday afternoon, January 6.

THE CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

During my recent trip abroad, I was afforded the opportunity of looking over the programs and activities of the Central Intelligence Agency in many countries. Prior to departure, I received extensive briefings from the Agency and during my trip talked in detail with all Agency representatives in the country in question, as has been my custom in past years when visiting abroad.

All felt the latter's programs were fully coordinated with United States policy of the Agency with every Ambassador. In every case, no exception, the Ambassador expressed his complete approval of the functioning of the Agency.

* I found no instances of any kind where CIA activities were uncontrolled, or contrary to United States policy. Indeed it would appear difficult, if not impossible, for such uncontrolled activities to occur. This belief is based on existing coordination procedures and policy directives stemming from

pliable to field activities.

I have always been impressed, in my contacts with the Agency, with the integrity and professional competence of its representatives. Only twice, in over 10 years, have I found anything to the contrary. Based on the present rules, I doubt if those cases of disagreement could now be duplicated.

It is a pleasure, therefore, to present to the Senate the fact that I agree with Secretary Rusk who, in talking about CIA people, stated: "There is a good deal of gallantry and a high degree of competence in those who have to help us deal with that part of the struggle for freedom."

The Central Intelligence Agency has a difficult, and at times a very dangerous mission to perform. Not all men, or women, of this or any other agency, are perfect, and it is easy to criticize any group which cannot defend itself because of the nature of its work. Nevertheless it is my considered judgment that the American public should be proud of this organization and its people, a group who serve our country with unstinting devotion.

In addition to this brief report, which of necessity must be general, I am also reporting my findings and conclusions in more detail to Chairman RUSSELL and the Subcommittee for the CIA of the Senate Armed Services Committee.

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